



CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

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APSCA aims to increase the value and effectiveness of independent social compliance audits by enhancing the professionalism, consistency and credibility of individuals and organizations performing them.

Labor rights and workplace conditions have become an increased focus for many organizations, due to more global supply chains, social responsibility, public perception and legislation. Independent *social compliance audits* are an important tool in advancing labor rights and workplace conditions for workers globally, however the rapid increase in required audits puts the profession at risk of not maintaining the quality of audits, limiting their positive impact on labor rights and workplace conditions. APSCA aims to raise the value, quality level and effectiveness of *social compliance auditing* and support *Member Auditors* and *Firms* who are performing them.

APSCA expects *Member Firms* to support the fair treatment and workplace conditions of its *Member Auditors* in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights.

The expectations outlined in this document aim to elevate the professionalism, quality, consistency and integrity of the *social compliance audit* field, which plays a vital role in initiatives to assess and improve workplace conditions throughout global supply chains.

By becoming a *Member* of APSCA, both *Auditors* and *Audit Firms* are committing to uphold the principles outlined in APSCA's Code of Professional Conduct (the Code).

It is intended that this document is shared with all clients advising of the requirement for Members to adhere fully with these expectations. The consequence of failing to uphold these expectations may result in the suspension or loss of APSCA Membership in the case of the *Member Firm* and certification/ registration for the *Member Auditor*. It is intended that the expectations noted throughout this document are applicable to all *audit personnel*.

Note: Hereinafter, "*Members*" refers to individual *Member Auditors* and *Member Firms*. It is intended that the expectations noted throughout this document are applicable to all *audit personnel*.

INVESTIGATIONS:

In instances where an investigation of a Member(s) is required, that investigation will be conducted as per APSCA's Incident Protocol, however the outcome of the investigation may be made public as deemed necessary by APSCA's Executive Board.

REPORTING VIOLATIONS:

Any APSCA Member who is aware of another APSCA Member or audit personnel who has committed a violation of APSCA's Code of Professional Conduct (Code), must inform the Member Firm for which the audit was conducted or APSCA.

Others who are aware of an APSCA Member or audit personnel who is to have alleged to have committed a violation of APSCA's Code, are encouraged to inform the Member Firm for which the audit was conducted or APSCA.

Email: director@theapsca.org or via APSCA's website (<http://www.theapsca.org/contact-us.html>)

Note: Throughout this document an APSCA Associate Social Compliance Auditor (APSCA ASCA) will be noted as ASCA, and an APSCA Certified Social Compliance Auditor (APSCA CSCA) will be noted as CSCA.

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1.0 INTEGRITY

- 1.1 **Conflicts of interest and impartiality:** *Members* providing *social compliance audit* services must be impartial and avoid conflicts of interest that, in fact or in appearance, may create an incentive to report anything other than the true and accurate facts gathered during a *social compliance audit*.
- 1.2 **Ethics:** *Members* must demonstrate a high standard of ethics and promote a culture of honesty in day to day operations.
- 1.3 **Corruption and Bribery:** *Member Firms* must have a defined zero tolerance approach to corruption and bribery. *Member Firms* shall have a system in place to identify risks and manage compliance to ensure it meets with all applicable laws relating to corrupt practices.
- 1.4 **Confidentiality:** *Members* must maintain confidentiality with respect to information gathered while executing a *social compliance audit*, and take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorized access to, or inadvertent disclosure of, information collected during or relating to an audit.

2.0 COMPETENCE

- 2.1 **Personnel:** *Member Firms* shall only deploy social compliance *audit personnel* (whether direct employees or independent contractors) who demonstrate, at a minimum, the relevant knowledge, skills and attributes outlined in the APSCA Competency Framework, and are going to act in accordance with the *Code*.
- 2.2 **Supervision:** *Member Firms* shall ensure all their personnel are adequately supervised to ensure all work is performed as directed and supports the conclusions reached.

3.0 REPORTING AND RECORDS

- 3.1 **Report Generation and Submission:** *Members* shall ensure an accurate, concise, timely, clear audit report, following the format/ methodology of the program being audited against. The report must be signed off by an APSCA Certified Social Compliance Auditor (*CSCA*) working for an APSCA *Member Firm*, is provided to the client and/ or audit requestor.
- 3.2 **Supporting Documentation:** To the extent that it does not conflict with applicable law, *Member Firms* shall ensure each audit report is supported by documentation, which evidences the work performed in sufficient detail to support the conclusions in the audit report.
- 3.3 **Handling of Sensitive Information:** Sensitive issues which may lead to retaliation against workers, or attempts to bribe, threaten or coerce *Member Auditors* shall be handled in a manner which protects workers and Member Auditors.
- 3.4 **Record Management:** *Member Firms* shall have systems in place to ensure all data is collected, stored and transferred in compliance with applicable law, is secure and only accessible by authorized persons.

4.0 OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS

- 4.1 **Transparency with APSCA:** Upon request by APSCA, true and accurate information shall be made available by *Member Firms* to verify conformance with the expectations in the *Code*.
- 4.2 **Accountability:** In APSCA's Competency Framework, *Members* are committed to act in accordance with this *Code*. All *Members*, shall comply with all relevant legislation, policies and procedures, and maintain the integrity of the *Code* at all times. Failure to do so, may result in the suspension or loss of APSCA Membership in the case of the *Member Firm* and certification/ registration for the *Member Auditor*.
- 4.3 **Policies and Systems:** *Member Firms* shall maintain policies and systems which demonstrate integrity and professional ethical behaviour as outlined by this *Code*. They will comply with all applicable laws and regulations, policies and procedures, follow professional business practices, and have processes in place for handling complaints and *appeals*.

- 4.4 **Inform:** Any APSCA *Member* who is aware of another APSCA *Member* or *audit personnel* who has committed a violation of APSCA's Code of Professional Conduct (*Code*), must inform the *Member Firm* for which the audit was conducted or APSCA.
- 4.5 **Audit Team:** Each audit team, shall have a minimum of one (1) *CSCA*. Audit Teams may consist of an *ASCA* who is supporting the audit under supervision of the *CSCA*. Auditors are able to sign off on an audit as a *CSCA* if they are conducting an independent audit on behalf of an APSCA *Member Firm* who takes responsibility for the process.

5.0 OBLIGATIONS OF APSCA

- 5.1 **Privacy and Data Protection:** APSCA shall only collect information from *Members* which is necessary to determine the level of the auditor to maintain membership and to be in alignment with APSCA's Data Security Policy. This information shall be accessed fully only by APSCA employees as required in the execution of their duties, unless express permission is given by the *Member Auditor* or *Member Firm*. APSCA complies with international data collection, privacy and security standards requirements, and ensures all information is collected and maintained in a way which protects the privacy of the *Member Auditor* and/ or *Member Firm*. **Any information reviewed during an investigation of a *Member* will be protected. For more information on APSCA's Data Security Policy, visit www.theapsca.org.**
- 5.2 **Transparency:** APSCA shall provide public access to, or disclosure of, appropriate and timely information about its certification process, and status (i.e. the granting, extending, investigating, maintaining, renewing, suspending, reducing the scope of, or withdrawing of certification) of any *Member*, gain confidence in the integrity and credibility of the process. Transparency is a principle of access to, or disclosure of, appropriate information.
- 5.3 **Duty to Act:** APSCA will uphold and promote the values outlined in the *Code*. Allegations, of misconduct against this *Code*, will be followed-up as per APSCA's Incident Protocol.

I, _____, confirm that I am a Member of APSCA and in consideration of that membership, I agree to be held accountable to this Code of Professional Conduct.

Signed by:

Print Name

Signature

Date (Print)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Appeal: An appeal refers to a situation where an APSCA Member has come before APSCA's disciplinary committee for failure to uphold this Code and disagrees with the outcome either with the Member firm and/ or APSCA.

ASCA: An APSCA Associate Social Compliance Auditor (ASCA) is an auditor who has been signed off by their member firm as meeting the criteria noted within APSCA Competency Framework; has been registered with APSCA; and is working towards sitting the CSCA exam. Throughout this document an APSCA ASCA will be noted as an ASCA.

Audit Firm / Member Firm: Companies or organizations offering and carrying out social compliance audit services. This definition does not include internal audit functions.

Audit Firm Personnel: All audit personnel who are involved in the co-ordination, execution, report writing and report quality review of the audit, including auditors.

Auditor / Member Auditor: Any individual who conducts social compliance audits, i.e. employed, freelance, or subcontract auditor who is a registered and a paid member of APSCA in either an ASCA or CSCA capacity.

Code: APSCA Code of Professional Conduct (this document).

CSCA: Certified Social Compliance Auditor designation signifies that an individual demonstrates specific experience, knowledge and skills within the field of social compliance auditing. Through a rigorous certification process - including experience, education, examination and assessment - the CSCA candidate must demonstrate the core competencies relevant to the profession.

Freelance Auditor: – see Subcontractor.

Member(s): Audit firm, individual auditors (ASCA and CSCA) including sub-contractors and freelancers who have submitted an application and been accepted, to be part of APSCA.

Social Compliance Audit: a way of evaluating, measuring, understanding and reporting an organization's social and ethical performance. A social compliance audit is intended to support as part of a larger system to improve labour conditions.

Subcontractor: Any audit firm and/ or individual auditor that is not under the direct employment of the Member Firm which has been contracted to conduct a social compliance audit on their behalf or on behalf of their client.

Worker: All personnel who work at a facility, including employees, subcontractors and freelancers (e.g. homeworkers, piece rate, canteen, security etc)

UN Guiding Principles for Business & Human Rights - http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf



APSCA

ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL
SOCIAL COMPLIANCE AUDITORS